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ABSTRACT

This report is a review of effects of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, a product of representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations who attended the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality. It reports that UNESCO has been disseminating the recommendations from the Salamanca World Conference and has assumed a catalytic role in disseminating ideas and practices concerning meeting special educational needs within the regular educational system. The main thrust of UNESCO's efforts has focused on developing national capacities for policymaking and systems management in support of inclusive education and bringing forward the concerns of people with disabilities, as well as other marginalized groups, on the wider educational agenda and on the agendas of international development organizations. Separate sections report on activities, accomplishments, and publications concerned with building capacities for educational change, human resource development, inclusive schools and community support programs, inclusion on the wider education agenda, and information, networking, and dissemination. (Contains 13 resources.) (DB)

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ED 444 276

Salamanca

Five Years On

A REVIEW OF UNESCO ACTIVITIES IN THE LIGHT OF

THE SALAMANCA STATEMENT AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION ON SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

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UNESCO 1999

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THE SALAMANCA STATEMENT
AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

ADOPTED AT
THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON
SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION:
ACCESS AND QUALITY

UNESCO 1999

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Contents

Introduction 5

I

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:
A PROCESS AND A CHALLENGE 7

II

INVOLVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTION OF UNESCO 11

Building Capacities for Educational Change 13
- Teacher Education 13
- Human Resource Development in Support of Inclusive Education 15

Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes 18
- Outcomes from Phase I and II 19

Inclusion on the Wider Education Agenda 21
- Developing a New Agenda 21
- Inclusive Initiatives within the UNESCO Education Sector 22
- Collaboration with the EFA Secretariat 24

Information, Networking and Dissemination 25
- Networking 26

III

MOVING FORWARD 27

- Intensifying and enhancing co-operation and collaboration 30
- Human Resource Development in Support of Inclusive Education 30
- Development Work 30
- Follow-up to EFA Year 2000 Assessment 30
- Support to Development towards Inclusion in Education 31
- Funding 31

Further reading 32

Introduction

In 1994, more than 300 participants representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations met in Salamanca, Spain, at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, to further discuss the objective of Education for All by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education. *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*, adopted unanimously at the Conference, are informed by the principle of inclusion that **ordinary schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions.** It reaffirms the commitment to Education for All, recognizing the necessity and urgency of providing education for all children, young people and adults.

> *'Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all...'*
>
> (Article 2, Salamanca Statement)

> *'Educational policies at all levels,... should stipulate that children with disabilities should attend their neighbourhood school that is the school that would be attended if the child did not have the disability'*
>
> (Article 18 Salamanca Framework for Action).

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action called upon UNESCO:

- To ensure that special needs education forms part of every discussion dealing with education for all in various fora
- To mobilize the support of organizations of the teaching profession in matters related to enhancing teacher education as regards provision for special educational needs
- To stimulate the academic community to strengthen research and networking and to establish regional centres of information and documentation; also, to serve as a clearing house for such activities and for disseminating the specific results and progress achieved at country level in pursuance of this Statement, and

- To mobilize funds through the creation of an expanded programme for inclusive schools and community support programmes, which would enable the launching of pilot projects that showcase new approaches for dissemination, and to develop indicators concerning the need for and provision of special needs education.

The Salamanca Statement also called upon the international community, in particular the partners of the Education for All movement, to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling and to support the development of special needs education as and integral part of all education programmes; and upon the ILO, WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF to strengthen their inputs for technical co-operation and to reinforce their co-operation and networking for more efficient support to the expanded and integrated provision of special needs education.

The 28th Session of the UNESCO General Conference (28C Resolution 1.5) recommended that the Member States should follow-up the recommendations of the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education and to reorient their educational strategies to meet special educational needs within the mainstream, as well as to work towards inclusive education. It was further recommended that the Member States should review their teacher education programmes with a view that teachers would become more aware of meeting the special educational needs within the mainstream setting.

Furthermore, the 28th Session of the General Conference also invited the Director-General to take steps in ensuring that the concerns of persons with disabilities will be reflected throughout the Education Sector Activities, especially in policy and planning, as well as in the Culture and Communication Sectors. It also called for reinforcing the inter-agency collaboration with ILO, UNICEF and WHO.

1

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: *A PROCESS AND A CHALLENGE*

Inclusive education has evolved as a movement to challenge exclusionary policies and practices and has gained ground over the past decade to become a favoured adopted approach in addressing the learning needs of all students in regular schools and classrooms. International initiatives from the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and elsewhere jointly add up to a growing consensus that all children have the right to be educated together, regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other condition, and that inclusion makes good educational and social sense.

A decade of international instruments and documents have promoted the principle of inclusive education – 1989 UN *Convention on the Right of the Child,* 1990 *the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs*, and the United Nations *Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities*, 1993. Today, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education provides the clearest and most unequivocal call for inclusive education and has reinforced the ideas expressed in the other international instruments.

Inclusion is to be seen as part of the wider struggle to overcome exclusive discourse and practices, and against the ideology that that each individual is completely separate and independent. Inclusion is about the improving of schooling. Rather than being a marginal theme concerned how a relatively small group of pupils might be attached to mainstream schools, it lays the foundations for an approach that could lead to the transformation of the system itself.

Today an increasing number of countries are working towards a more integrated approach to human service development. The use of available human and financial resources can be maximized through co-operation between the public and private sector, and by addressing exclusion issues within an intersectoral perspective of collaboration. Within this new scenario of international and interorganisational collaboration, the idea of inclusive education is now influencing reform in the education system as well as the development and restructuring of schooling in many countries.

A UNESCO survey of 63 countries, carried out in 1995, concerning developments in special needs education revealed that integration is a key policy idea in many of the countries in the sample, although only a small number spelled out their guiding principles explicitly. In 96 per cent of sample countries the national ministry of education held the responsibility for the administration and organization of services for children with disabilities. State funding was the predominant source of finance, whilst other funding came from voluntary bodies, non-governmental organizations and parents. Most countries acknowledged the importance of parents in matters relating to special educational

provision, and some gave them a central role in the process of assessment and decision making. There was also evidence of a substantial increase in in-service training of staff related to special needs issues. However, many countries continue to face fiscal and personnel constraints such that even maintaining the existing level of investment may not be easy.

Attaining the universally accepted goal of Education for All has been, and remains, one of the most daunting challenges facing the global community today. It is estimated that several hundred million children and youth are still denied access to even the most basic education necessary to develop their potential for becoming independent and contributing members in their contemporary communities, societies and cultures.

Reaching the unreached, all those children and youth excluded – for reasons of disability, poverty, geographical remoteness, political and economic turmoil, or deeply rooted gender and racial discrimination – has now been accepted as a priority in virtually all countries. Developing countries, for which this endeavour is especially challenging, are being strongly supported by the international development community in the effort to provide Education for All – the key to sustainable social and economic growth.

Within this paradigm, it is recognized that current Education for All strategies and programmes are largely insufficient or inappropriate with regard to needs of children and youth with special needs. Where programmes targeting various marginalized/excluded groups do exist, they have functioned outside the mainstream – special programmes, specialized institutions, specialist educators. Notwithstanding the best intentions, it is conceded that too often the result has been exclusion: differentiation becoming a form of discrimination, leaving children with special needs outside the mainstream of school life and later, as adults, outside community social and cultural life in general.

II

INVOLVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTION OF UNESCO

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In conformity with 28C Resolution 1.5. adopted by the 28th Session of the General Conference, UNESCO's driving force over the past five years has been in disseminating the messages which emanated from the Salamanca World Conference, leading discussions and debates, and initiating and supporting innovation. UNESCO has assumed a catalytic role in sharing and disseminating new thinking and new practice with respect to addressing special educational needs within the regular education system.

The main thrust of UNESCO's efforts has focussed on:

- developing national capacities for policy making and system management in support of inclusive education, and
- bringing forward the concerns of people with disabilities, as well as other marginalized groups on the wider educational agenda and on the agendas of international development organizations.

Building Capacities for Educational Change

Capacity building in support of inclusive education is one of the most crucial elements in developing more inclusive education systems, and it is the area where UNESCO has invested considerably and where it made a major impact. Capacity building is implemented mainly through training activities and promoted through networking nationally and internationally. Training is targeted to regular teachers and teacher trainers, but it is worth mentioning that all educational staff, including managers and administrators, as well as decision-makers, are also participating in information and training initiatives in the framework of inclusive education.

Teacher Education

UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom, a project that was developed to assist Member States to adopt more inclusive strategies for responding to children's special learning needs in regular schools and to support regular teacher education. The Pack was elaborated in the late eighties, was field tested in early 1990s and produced in final form in 1993.

The main elements of the Resource Pack consist of the following: study materials, these include an extensive range of readings, stimulus sheets and classroom activities; a course leader's guide with detailed guidance on how to organize course and facilitate sessions based on the study materials; and two demonstration videos, with documentation on recommended approaches during training courses and examples of inclusive practices in schools.

The Pack introduces new thinking in special needs education and looks at disabilities and learning difficulties from the point of view of interaction between the learner and the environment, discarding the medical concept of disabilities and learning difficulties. Supportive school environments, active pedagogy to maximize participation in learning, collaboration in teaching and problem solving are but a few of the aspects which the materials aim to promote. The materials are used flexibly and can be modified to suit local training contexts at the pre-service and in-service level, as well as in school-based training.

Experience within this project indicates that those wishing to use the Resource Pack, must receive training in the approaches it recommends. The pattern used for the training consist of two stages: a demonstration workshop, led by international resource persons, followed by a supervised practice workshop, at which future facilitators act as co-ordinators, with a group of teacher. To facilitate this, UNESCO has over the past six years facilitated the training of an international resource team engaged in national, regional and international training and dissemination.

One measure of the success of the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack Special Needs in the Classroom is that it has been used in about 80 countries and has been translated into more than 20 languages.

Ghana	A policy supporting the integration of children with disabilities in regular schools has since 1993 prompted the Ghana Education Service (GES) to embark on a national initiative in organizing and providing support to regular schools. This came about when UNESCO engaged in a four year (UNDP funded) project in reorienting the input and support of special teachers within the GES. Through a series of five intensive workshops, a team of special teachers, head teachers and inspectors received training based on the UNESCO Pack materials. The special teachers were then assigned as peripatetic teachers at district level, to support, advise, provide training and offer referral services when needed. The are entrusted in assisting schools in creating a supportive environment. Ghana today is networking with Namibia to share expertise and experiences.
Lebanon	The Lebanese Down's Syndrome Association in co-operation with UNESCO Beirut organized in February 1999 a workshop which brought together 45 participants, including seven from Egypt, Morocco and Yemen. This workshop was the first initiative with Lebanon on teacher training in support of inclusive education and the target groups were teams of teachers from schools welcoming children with disabilities. The interest generated by this workshop led to the organization of a National Conference on Inclusive Education at UNESCO Beirut in April 1999.
Palestine	In support of its policy to promote inclusive education, UNESCO co-operated with the Ministry of Education in training a national team of district resource persons to support schools in responding to special educational needs of learners in the regular schools. A series of workshops based on the UNESCO Pack materials were led by regional and national resource persons.
Portugal	The Institute of Educational Innovation, Ministry of Education, carried out a two year project to introduce the UNESCO materials to teacher training institutions in all provinces of the country. Teacher educators teamed with teachers from the demonstration schools, and through a series of training workshops, they engaged in concrete applications of the new methodologies at the school level. Concurrently the ideas and practices promoted in the UNESCO materials are gradually permeating into the regular teacher education programmes.
Peru	"Integration of Disabled Children in Regular Schools", a two phase project funded by DANIDA and managed by the Ministry of Education will terminate in 1999. Situated within the framework of a major programme promoted by UNESCO 'Toward a basic education for all' and linked to a regional initiative promoted by UNESCO Santiago the 'Special Needs in the Classroom' project, it aims at changing attitudes and practices in the educational community and amongst parents in addressing and responding to the learning needs of children with disabilities. Started in four provinces (currently implemented in eight provinces), the project's main thrust centred around building co-operation

between the selected pilot regular schools and the special centres of education. The project draws its principles and applications from the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack. The project has already changed the way professionals, authorities and teachers perceive children with disability, especially those with intellectual disability; it has helped in creating the basic conditions for a demonstration model to facilitate integration, and has helped in establishing an interdisciplinary team. The multiplier effect is already such that psychologists and head teachers are asking the Ministry in how they could be included, and it is the Ministry's plan to disseminate these experiences to more schools as well as to other parts of the country. The project was extended to Bolivia and Ecuador.

Human Resource Development in Support of Inclusive Education

> *'Appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive schools.'*
>
> (Article 40, Salamanca Framework for Action)

In line with the above UNESCO carried out a number of initiatives to bring in the participation of different stakeholders into the educational change process towards inclusion. It is important that all actors share a common vision and a common language when it comes to addressing change which impacts on different streams within the education system. Equally it is important to involve the civic community in the educational innovation and development work.

A concrete outcome of activities undertaken for human resource development is that today there exist resource persons in the different world regions, skilled and competent to disseminate and develop the ideas and practices put forward in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action.

Following is a brief of some activities undertaken:

International Workshop 'Management for Innovation in Special Needs Education', Ghana 1997

This activity engaged practitioners from 20 countries, from the different regions (with priority given to Africa). The workshop was meant to provide a platform for examining the nature and the processes of change as relates to inclusive education – as it relates to the central level of policy and organization – but also at the community level and particularly in working with schools. The workshop programme centred around four major themes crucial to educational change and development: analysis of context, process of change, planning for implementation and working with people. The themes were discussed and debated through country case studies, presentations, discussion

groups and school visits. The workshop facilitated networking in Africa as well as internationally.

Workshop 'Human Resource Development in Support of Inclusive Education', Uganda, February 1999

The workshop was organized in close collaboration with the Uganda National Institute for Special Education (UNISE) and brought together twenty-five teacher educators from Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The workshop aimed at sharing knowledge and skills to assist the participants in their national effort in the further development of teacher education initiatives at the pre-service and in-service level. All participants carried out some follow-up activities upon their return home. These varied depending on their professional settings and priorities within their context.

A similar initiative is envisaged with eight French speaking African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius and Senegal), to be organized in Mali in November 1999.

South Asia Sub-Regional Seminar, Nepal 1995

In line with the developments in the Asia Pacific region in the course of the Asia Decade of Disabled Persons, and a follow-up to the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education, a sub-regional seminar on policy orientations for developments in special needs education was organized in close collaboration with UNICEF. Participants came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Japan Support to Special Needs Education

Within the framework of the agreement between Japan and UNESCO, support has been provided to the Mobile Training Team scheme established within this project. Between 1994 and 1999 three countries – Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Bangladesh – benefited from this co-operation

Mongolia (1994-1995): Study visits were undertaken by three Mongolian educators to China and Japan, which were followed by an in-country national workshop, introducing the principle and approaches of inclusive education. This small initiative facilitated laying the ground work for bilateral co-operation with DANIDA in the field of special needs education.

Uzbekistan (1995-1996): This activity came as a follow-up to the Nepal 1995 Policy Seminar. Two specialists undertook a study visit to Japan and the Republic of Korea, examining planning and curriculum development. A national seminar was organized in November. 1996 focussing on planning, policy and teacher education. This activity sparked the Central Asia Seminar on Multi-Sectoral Collaboration for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities organized jointly by UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF and WHO in 1998.

Bangladesh (1997-1999): Two Bangladeshi officials carried out a study visit in 1997 to Malaysia and Indonesia respectively to look into developments related to integration of children with disabilities as well as to study community-based rehabilitation

programmes. A two week national workshop followed, one week focussing on policy issues and the second week on teacher training, based on the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack. More recently, in 1999, UNESCO Bangkok organized another training workshop geared to the NGO community working with children with special needs.

Promotion of Basic education for Children with Special Needs (Asia Region)

This two year project, funded by Japan (1999-2000) and managed by UNESCO Bangkok, builds upon the Salamanca principles and is intended to promote the inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools through working with the education system, policy and decision makers, administrators and the school system. Eight countries are participating: China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Vietnam. By examining the policy and practices of each of the countries as concerns education of children with special needs, technical support will be provided to country teams in the area of curriculum, teacher training, management of inclusive education, organization of support in schools and communities. The project is intended to build national capacities in implementing educational initiatives for children with special needs and to foster networking in the region.

Special needs education in reconstruction, Bosnia-Herzegovina

With the financial support from Germany (1997-1999), UNESCO engaged in technical co-operation related to the development of schooling. The project activities aimed at promoting a dialogue between responsible authorities, educators and practitioners as well as building expertise amongst different educational groups working with for children with disabilities at the pre-school and primary level. Starting with the first activity, Days of Reflection, the different concerned specialists had the possibility of examining their present context in the light of international trends and developments. This was followed by a series of activities with focus on building expertise and introducing new thinking amongst the pedagogical institutes in the different cantons. UNESCO has also facilitated the setting up of a Special Needs Working Group which provides a means of guiding improvement efforts within the country. The project has benefited from networking with Portugal.

Latin America regional initiatives

Two regional meetings with responsible officials of Special Education from Ministries of Education and National Disability Councils in the region were organized in Chile 1996 and Brazil 1998 to examine developments and discuss specific issues, such as curriculum adaptations, training of human resources, evaluation, vocational education and statistics. These meetings facilitated creating common language in the region, as well as networking.

Regional workshop on *'Changing the Management of Special Educational Needs'* for principals of special and primary education, as well as for principals of related institutions was organized in Chile, April 1998. The workshop focussed on approaches to improving schools and changing of management, roles played by technical teams and the design and implementation of National Development Plans.

Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes

In pursuance of the implementation of the 28C Resolution 1.5. adopted by the 28th Session of the General Conference, and in line with Article 4 of the Salamanca Statement, UNESCO organized an informal consultation in March 1995 with Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, to discuss the project proposal *'Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes'* with the aim of mobilizing support from donor countries.

The 'Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes' project departed from the principle endorsed at Salamanca, namely, that it is better and socially and economically more efficient to integrate – to include – children with disabilities and learning difficulties in mainstream school and regular education programmes than to segregate them in specialized institutions or, worse, not educate them at all. The project's aim thus has been to foster wider access and quality education for children and youth with special educational needs, seeking to promote their inclusion in regular education provision.

The Project aspires to identify, support and disseminate information on small-scale innovations at the national level, and is intended to serve as a catalyst for all countries that wish to carry out initiatives in line with the Salamanca Framework for Action. The Project target areas are policy and school development, teacher education, education of the deaf, adult education, transition to active life, development of educational support services in schools and communities, parent education, early childhood education.

The basic parameters of the 'Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes' project place emphasis on:

- small scale pilot/demonstration projects with built-in dissemination strategies, i.e. to ensure sustainability and replicability
- capacity building in the form of trained teams of professionals at national, provincial and local levels
- upstream work to incorporate new initiatives into national planning
- genuine parental and community involvement in new initiatives
- benefits to a wider number of countries than those directly participating through networking and exchange opportunities, particularly at the sub-regional level

Phase I (1996-1997) was the initiation of the project. Member states were invited to participate and submit country proposals within a defined framework. These proposals were reviewed jointly by UNESCO and representatives from the donor countries.

As part of the process enabling countries to further develop specific project proposals, UNESCO co-sponsored a series of meetings to implicate and improve awareness among governments of the Salamanca principles and Framework for Action. These

targeted principally the countries of French-speaking Africa, where policies and programmes of inclusive schooling for children and youth with special educational needs were as yet rudimentary or non-existent. These meetings would ultimately provide the impetus for ministries of education of a number of countries to undertake their first initiatives for inclusive education for children with special educational needs.

Thirteen countries participated in Phase I: Benin, Burkina Faso, China, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Palestine, Tanzania and Zambia.

From UNESCO's perspective, the key to successful country projects would be national implementation, the best guarantee of the ultimate sustainability of inclusive education innovations and practices. Apart from the initial financial support provided to the countries participating in the first phase, UNESCO's inputs consisted of short interventions by consultants and/or resource persons for training workshops in individual countries; the provision of materials; a number of study visits (generally to countries within the region concerned); and timely observations and guidance from UNESCO's Special Needs Education Unit in Paris and from concerned field offices.

Another important element was the development of partnerships at the country level with other international organizations, such as UNICEF and NGOs primarily to invite their active participation and to ensure sustainability.*

Phase II (1998-1999) covers eleven countries: Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Paraguay, South Africa, Vietnam and Yemen, with country initiatives focussing mainly the target areas of school development and teacher education. During the second phase, a greater emphasis has been put on building human capacities and facilitating networking and exchange between countries and regions. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation guidelines have been elaborated to assist the partners in their implementation.

Outcomes from Phase I and II

The major achievements since 1996 at the national and local level are listed below:

- successful in-built dissemination strategies to ensure the sustainability of the pilot initiative and dissemination of the experience gained through the project
- an impact on up-stream work incorporating new thinking into national policy and planning, e.g. in teacher education
- considerable changes in attitudes and thinking around inclusive education amongst policy makers, educational administrators and the civic community
- knowledge, skills and human resource development at national and provincial levels
- creation of managerial and leadership skills for sustainability

* A full report on the first phase of the project is available: *Inclusive Schools & Community Support Programmes 1996-1997 First Phase (Écoles intégratrices & programmes de soutien communautaire 1996-1997 Première phase).*

- adaptations in pedagogical approaches in teacher training programmes and at the school level so as to facilitate the integration of students with special needs in regular schools
- stronger networking of institutions, agencies, and professionals at the national and regional levels.

Finally, it is noteworthy than in a number of cases, UNESCO's relatively small financial and technical contribution to a national project proved to be catalytic in drawing additional supporting resources from other funding sources and agencies.

'Support to Special Needs Education in Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa'
This project was carried out during the course of the Phase I, funded by the Government of Portugal. The project aimed at introducing new trends in special needs education to the Portuguese-speaking African countries: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe. Two workshops were organised in Maputo, Mozambique and in Lisbon, Portugal, with teams from each of the five countries, focussing on orienting and building human capacities in support of inclusive education. A small-scale follow-up activity has taken place in Mozambique.

Networking is an important feature of the Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes. As most of the participating countries introduce the principle of inclusive education for the first time in their context, sharing experiences becomes a means of reflection and facilitates the evaluation of the implementation. UNESCO has provided consultants from different world regions to work with country teams, as well as promoted one-to-one contacts between the participating countries, and more importantly, linking with existing education initiatives within the countries. Study visits to countries in the region have been carried out. Resource people from country projects have provided technical input to training activities to other partner countries.

Inclusion on the Wider Education Agenda

During the past year, the Section for Special Needs Education has engaged in an internal reflection concerning the development of inclusion in education. The Section has carried a number of brainstorming and discussion sessions with researchers for working with and around new concepts related to the conceptual, educational and organizational implications of inclusion in education.

Developing a New Agenda

It is evident that there is a strong international trend towards developing education systems to become more inclusive. The transformative inclusion agenda replaces the earlier concern with the identification of children who 'have learning difficulties' with the identification of barriers to learning for all children and the mobilization of resources within learners, teachers, communities and government.

Difficulties in learning are no longer seen as the property of individuals but as arising out of an interaction between learners and the human and material resources available to support learning. A core task in education for the transformative inclusion agenda is to maximize participation for all through minimizing all barriers to learning. The development of a pedagogy of inclusion is a key element of this task.

A transformative inclusion agenda is concerned with identifying all forms of exclusion and barriers to learning within national policies, cultures, educational institutions and communities. It has implications for redirecting resources, inter-sectoral collaboration, teacher training, curriculum development, local capacity building and community involvement. It is about developing education within communities that is relevant to local needs and maximizing the use of community resources to overcome problems. It requires everyone involved in supporting learning at whatever level, in identifying and responding to the priorities for development as they exist locally. It emphasizes the roles of communities and centres of learning in creating and sustaining each other.

The transformative inclusion agenda is based on the assertion of the same right to a quality education within their communities for all learners. Thus it can be seen to concur with the task of Education for All.

Institutions which respond to this new agenda will have to change significantly the way they are organized and different structures will need to be brought into being. A concern with overcoming all exclusionary pressures in education will be permeated throughout the organization. Those responsible for special needs education or other excluded groups have a special role in ensuring that all forms of exclusion are accurately identified, inclusionary potential mobilized and that the EFA agenda is continually customized to local circumstances.

Of course, the obstacles to achieving the aims of Inclusion and Education for All are formidable. The lack of progress on the alleviation of poverty is the most significant of the many persisting barriers to the development of quality basic education globally. However the task can be assisted if those working to achieve it separately can be brought together under a common set of principles and strategy for implementation.

Inclusive Initiatives within the UNESCO Education Sector

Within the Education Sector, there have been increased efforts in addressing concerns of persons with disabilities during the past two years although the principle of inclusion has not yet permeated within the overall planning. Following are outputs from some major educational initiatives:

a) ***Fifth International Conference on Adult Learning*** (UNESCO Institute of Education, Hamburg), July 1997 – a paper on adult learning and people with special needs was prepared for the conference, and a panel of persons with disabilities led a discussion on this issue.

The Hamburg Declaration – The Agenda for the Future states:

> *The rights of adults with disabilities in education have to be recognized by ensuring that they have full access to adult education programmes and opportunities, that all forms of learning and training is accessible for disabled persons, and by ensuring that the learning and training provided respond to their educational needs and goals. It is also important that training institutions foster policies that ensure equal access, services and vocational and employment opportunities.*

b) ***International Consultation on Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education,*** September 1997 (organized by the Section for Special Needs Education and Early Childhood and Family Education). Twenty-one specialists from fifteen countries representing all major world regions were drawn from United Nations specialized agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations, donor organizations, academic institutions and parent organizations. They represented the medical, education and social service sectors and the mix of participants made it possible to develop strategies that have meaning for different partners and geographical contexts. The recommendations which emanated from the Consultation focussed on policy, partnerships, families, transitions, programme planning and service provision, training of personnel, children in institutions, assessment, sustainability, communication and information dissemination, as well as funding.

c) ***Special Study on Data Collection*** (1996-1999) As part of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) revision UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat have been engaged in a study focussing on the development of defini-

tions, statistics and indicators in the area of special needs education. OECD has been co-ordinating the study. UNESCO facilitated the participation of five Member States (Chile, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Uganda and Zambia) in the piloting of the draft questionnaire, and provided input to the revision of the questionnaire. Co-ordinated by the Section for Special Needs Education, the work has benefited for the input of the Division of Statistics and Editorial Office for the World Education Report.

d) ***III Session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations,*** Portugal, July 1998 – UNESCO Section for Special Needs Education liaised with the organizing unit at the United Nations and the Youth Co-ordination Unit at UNESCO to promote the participation of youth with disabilities in this Forum. Furthermore, UNESCO sponsored one youth with disability from Africa to participate in the Forum.

e) ***World Conference on Higher Education,*** October 1998 – A survey of provision for students with disabilities from 40 universities from the different world regions was made available to the Conference by the Section for Special Needs Education so as to sensitize officials responsible for Higher Education on the needs of students with disabilities.

The Declaration of the Conference stipulates that

> *'admission to higher education should be based on merit, capacity, efforts, perseverance and devotion, showed by those seeking access to it. Therefore, no discrimination can be accepted in granting access to higher education on grounds of race, gender, language or religion, or economic, cultural or social distinctions, or disability... The access of some special target groups, including persons with disability, must be actively facilitated. Special material help and educational solutions can help overcome the obstacles that these groups face, both in accessing and in continuing higher education'*
>
> Articles 3 a, 3 d, *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action*

f) ***Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education,*** April 1999 (Section for Technical and Vocational Education) – the Congress adopted recommendations for inclusive technical and vocational education for marginalized youth and youth with special needs.

The Congress recommends:

> *"TVE programmes should be designed as comprehensive and inclusive systems to accommodate the needs of all learners; they must be accessible to all..."* Aspirations and

achievements of disabled youth must be broadened...
"Those who are able to join mainstream TVE programmes should be assisted to do so, those with more severe disabilities should be provided with special programmes and learning strategies to realize their potential and optimize their participation in society and the work force".

Article 4.2, 4.7, *Lifelong learning and training: a bridge to the future: Recommendations*

g) ***Co-operation with the International Institute of Education Planning*** (IIEP), April 1999. Following initiatives taken in 1994 and 1995, a half-day seminar for trainees was organized by the Section for Special Needs Education.

Collaboration with the EFA Secretariat

As a part of this new vision, the Section for Special Needs Education has increased its collaboration with the EFA Secretariat: The Education for All Steering Committee discussed and debated inclusion as a means to achieve Education for All in their 10th meeting in September 1998. A discussion paper was prepared for this purpose, which will be further developed for wider distribution. Furthermore, within the framework of the EFA Year 2000 Assessment, a thematic study *'Participation in Education: Inclusion of Disabled Learners'* is in preparation. It will represent a global review of developments over the past decade. This thematic study will be complemented by five national case studies (Brazil, Morocco, the Philippines, Romania and Uganda), one from each of the world regions. The case study *'Inclusion in Education and National Development'* will look into educational innovations targeted to minimize exclusion of various groups, such as nomadic populations, children with HIV/AIDS, refugees, street and working children, Romany children, etc.

Information, Networking and Dissemination

The Section for Special Needs Education disseminates information on activities related to inclusive education and special needs education through an annual Newsletter (since 1994) and through an Internet-site (since 1998). The Section for Special Needs Education also takes care of dispatching publications and documents requested by the Member States, NGOs, institutes and individuals.

Materials produced in support of inclusive education during the past few years have had a focus on practical steps in helping schools to become more inclusive; these include guide books for teachers on how to help children with specific disabilities within regular classes; teachers' experiences on including children with disabilities; as well as reviews and support materials on legislation, organization of services and developments in inclusive education targeted to educational managers and administrators. UNESCO regional offices have also produced some materials targeted to their regions.

Inclusive Education on the Agenda presents some recent international trends in working towards inclusive education (1998). This paper was prepared for the World Bank Human Development Week.

Welcoming Schools, teachers' stories on including children with disabilities into regular schools (1999) (with accompanying video). This training material is based on teachers' stories across cultures on how they ensure that children with disabilities are fully included in regular classrooms. It gives ideas on school and classroom practices, curriculum differentiation and professional development activities that facilitate access to learning for all children.

Open File on Inclusive Education, a dossier comprising a series of themes related to the organisation and management of inclusive systems of education. It is targeted to administrators, managers, teacher educators and all those at national, regional and local levels of education systems who have a part to play in the implementation of inclusive education practices.

Video 'On the Deaf' with an accompanying handbook will provide essential, simple, factual information to parents of deaf children, educators, community workers and other professionals who deal with deaf children. The video is targeted specifically to the African context but can be used elsewhere, as well.

Educating Students with High Ability (1998) – A handbook which responds to some of the questions teachers have regarding the needs of highly able students, and suggests ways in which teachers can start meeting these needs, even in circumstances with little support.

25

Module on Disabilities, training material to supplement the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom will provide basic information and understanding on most common childhood disabilities and disadvantages, and how to overcome these impediments in regular schools.

Networking

UNESCO continues to collaborate closely with the United Nations and the specialized agencies, in particular with ILO, UNICEF and WHO. Informal inter-agency meetings have been held once or twice a year and two sub-regional workshops on multi-sectoral collaboration within the framework of the UN Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities have been organized in Ivory Coast for French-speaking African countries (1995) and in Uzbekistan for the Central Asia region (1998). Three community-based rehabilitation projects have been jointly carried out in Ghana, Namibia and Morocco. The UN agencies also issued a joint message for the International Day of the Persons with Disabilities in 1997.

UNESCO is a member of the International Working Group on Disability and Development (IWGDD), established in 1997, with a mission to advance the concerns of people with disabilities on the agendas of donor and other organizations. This group is composed of representatives of donor and development agencies, international organizations and governmental and non-governmental organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities.

Non-governmental organizations are UNESCO's partner at all levels. UNESCO has a long-established co-operation with the major international disability organizations, as well as with international NGOs working with developing countries on inclusive education. National NGOs are also participating in the implementation of specific country initiatives – these partners include disabled persons' organizations, parents' associations, etc.

Working with institutes enriches and strengthens the capacity of work of the Section of Special Needs Education. This co-operation is concretized in the elaboration of conceptual papers as well as in the preparation of publications, training materials, and sharing expertise and support from researchers and practitioners from all over the world.

UNESCO is supporting an action research project ***'Developing Sustainable Inclusion Policies: Brazil, England, India, South Africa'***. This comparative study on the implementation of inclusion policies aims at improving implementation practices through sharing of experiences from different contexts and documenting them for wider dissemination.

III

MOVING FORWARD

"To show regard for diversity and individuality is a fundamental principle... Education can promote cohesion if it strives to take the diversity of individuals and groups into consideration while taking care that it does not itself contribute to social exclusion"

International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century: Learning: The Treasure Within

The groundwork for UNESCO's involvement in and contribution to the advancement of inclusion in education was laid at the *World Conference in Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs* (1990, Jomtien, Thailand) and at the *World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality* (1994, Salamanca, Spain). Although the agendas of these two major landmarks are still to be completed, there are also gaps identified on education agendas of many countries and organizations that will require concerted efforts to be redressed.

It is suggested that the Education for All and Special Needs Education agendas should no longer be separated. Currently 'Education for All' is sometimes seen to be concerned with all learners except those who have 'special needs'. There is even a concern that 'Education for All' will be further fragmented by the creation of separate structures responding to the need for education of marginalized, oppressed and socially disadvantaged groups. Equally the development of Special Needs Education in terms of 'inclusive education' has commonly retained a focus on including disabled learners and others who experience difficulties in learning within the mainstream of education. Both 'inclusion' and 'education for all' have to be about the inclusion in education of ALL learners. Special Needs Education – transformed into a concern with inclusion of all in education – and Education for All should be brought together in a common central task: how can communities, schools and education systems be encouraged to reach out and respond to the full diversity of learners; to all those who experience barriers to learning and participation in education? The recognition of this task affects the way problems are analyzed and responsibilities shared, how policies are conceived and implemented.

Following are some suggestions for further action.

Intensifying and enhancing co-operation and collaboration

The recent initiatives concerning persons with disabilities within UNESCO's Education Sector need to be further reinforced. Internal reflection and sensitization on the question of inclusion of ALL marginalized/excluded groups – and minimizing/reducing exclusion in education – will need to be carried out in order to implant inclusion as crosscutting issue. Furthermore, during the next years there is a need to scrutinize how UNESCO's mission in different sectors can enhance inclusion in all spheres of life. The 'Culture of Peace' initiative could possibly provide a platform for discussion on exclusion and discrimination on the grounds of disability, ethnic origin, religion, language, etc. Another possibility for internal reflection could be opened around the pointers and recommendations of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Learning: The Treasure Within).

The Section for Special Needs Education will work towards widening its networking both with academic institutions and development organizations. Universities and/or institutes in each region will be identified and invited to participate more actively in human resource development. The possibility of engaging in a distance education course on inclusion will be examined.

Human Resource Development in Support of Inclusive Education

A series of workshops around the themes of the *'Open File on Inclusive Education'* will be organized, targeting specifically educational managers and administrators. In addition to the themes covered in the 'Open File', some basic indicators for inclusion relevant to different contexts could be elaborated to facilitate monitoring developments in Member States.

Development Work

It is envisaged that development work will be expanded with new clusters of countries such as Arab States, Baltic States, Caribbean region and parts of Asia, as the Pacific. The work will focus on introducing new trends in addressing the needs of various disadvantaged groups, reviewing policies, teacher education and training educational personnel, and curriculum.

Follow-up to EFA Year 2000 Assessment

It is essential that follow-up activities that build on the outcomes of the EFA Year 2000 Assessment be undertaken. Building on the national case studies on 'Inclusion in Education' some specific country projects could be carried out with the aim of identifying and minimizing barriers to learning and development. This would engage all stakeholders who are currently working with and on separate initiatives targeted to various marginalized/excluded groups, government representatives and education administrators to work towards a more coherent approach in policy and practice. It would require also closer collaboration of the UNESCO Sections concerned, as well as with other UN specialized agencies and NGOs.

Support to Development towards Inclusion in Education

Two major studies are envisaged over the next four years: *The Review on Inclusion of Disabled Learners* will document developments regarding the inclusion of this specific group in formal and non-formal regular education. The previous reviews were carried out in 1989 and 1995. *The Study on Teacher Education* will examine both regular and special teacher education programmes as they relate to recent developments in policies on inclusion in education.

Funding

The work reflected in this review would not have been possible without the financial support of the Nordic countries and personnel support from Spain and the Netherlands. The backing and technical support given to the Special Needs Education Section provided an impetus to the work and ensured its steady progress.

UNESCO is most appreciative of the commitment of the different partners in helping it fulfil its mission, and invites other Member States to join in and contribute towards enhancing Education for All.

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Web-sites:

EENET – Enabling Education Network
http://www.eenet.org.uk

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
http://www.european-agency.org

UNESCO Special Needs Education
http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/sne